

Summer 7-1-2000

Public Sector Safety Report, Summer 2000

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Public Sector Enforcement

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Public Sector

SAFETY REPORT

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Enforcement exemption offered to public works departments

Highway and street construction workers are among the most frequently injured employees in Maine. To reduce injuries to these workers, the Maine Department of Labor's (MDOL) SafetyWorks! program offers free consultation to all public works departments in the state. As an incentive for participation, MDOL will exempt departments from scheduled public sector enforcement activity for one year if they work with SafetyWorks! and make good-faith effort to implement the consultants' recommendations. This exemption applies only to scheduled enforcement inspections; MDOL will continue to investigate accidents and employee complaints.

MDOL mailed information about this exemption opportunity to public works departments in late June. The deadline for requesting assistance under this program is 30 working days after receipt of the letter. Any public workers manager who has not received a letter may call SafetyWorks! at 1-877-SAFE-345 for more information.

Address the hazards at road construction work zones

Twenty-seven Maine workers have died due to work zone accidents in the past nine years. Supervisors and employees can take the following steps to reduce the risk of injury to flaggers and other road construction workers:

- Move work zone signs as the work area changes during the day. Signs placed out in the morning may be far from the work area later in the day. As a result, drivers may see the signs too early and forget about the warning by the time they come to the work area.
- Flaggers need to be alert to all drivers, especially those who are not paying attention. Flaggers should:
 - Always face oncoming traffic.
 - Plan an escape route in case a driver heads toward them.
- Watch out for road rage. Flaggers may bare the brunt of drivers' anger at traffic delays. Flaggers need to be cautioned about this possibility and instructed to:
 - Be courteous and not argue with the drivers.
 - Contact their supervisor for assistance.

Young workers need protection

Recreation and public works departments rely on teenagers for extra help in the summer. Because of their inexperience and lack of training, teens are more likely to become injured at work than adults. This tendency exists even though child labor laws prohibit teens from doing the most hazardous jobs. To address this problem, SafetyWorks! offers a booklet about the rights and responsibilities of teen workers. For a free copy of *Do You Work? A Guide for Working Teens*, call 1-877-SAFE-345.

Regulations and compliance assistance for Maine public sector workplaces can be found on the internet at <http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/newpsw.htm>

Return Service Requested

MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR
Public Sector Enforcement

Public Sector

S A F E T Y R E P O R T

Summer 2000

Public Sector

S A F E T Y R E P O R T

The Public Sector Safety Report is issued quarterly to inform public sector employers and employees on safety and health enforcement issues. Published by the Maine Department of Labor, the compliance and enforcement agency for occupational safety and health regulations for public sector workplaces in Maine.

Please post this Report to share the information with employees.

To be added to the mailing list, or to make address corrections, send information to *Public Sector Safety Report*, MDOL, 45 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0045, fax to (207) 624-6449 or e-mail at webmaster_bls@state.me.us. TTY 1-800-794-1110.